

Friday, October 12th, 2007

**Of Casinos and Indian Tribes:** By now you may have heard that there are several groups trying to get federal recognition as the federally sanctioned Juaneno Indian Tribe in Orange County. It is very clear that the groups seeking recognition as this tribe are doing so because they intend to establish a casino in urban Orange County. I have a copy of a lobbying contract under which the lobbyists are paid only by a contingent fee of the "take" of the eventual casino. If there is no casino, they are working for free. Furthermore, the Orange County Register recently featured a story in which one of the tribe organizers, Joyce Stanfield Perry, says, "it is our inherent right to build any kind of economic development once we have a government-to-government relationship." There has been talk of putting this casino in San Juan Capistrano or near Irvine's Great Park. The Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs is scheduled to decide whether to recognize this tribe in about 60 days. If they do achieve recognition technically they could establish a casino on any land they buy in Orange County, although they would have to get a gambling "compact" with the state.

I oppose the recognition of this tribe and I oppose a gambling casino in Orange County, or frankly any other urban area. Lest you think I am not consistent on this issue, while in the California State Legislature I aggressively opposed the establishment of what would have been the largest casino on earth for a roughly 20 member tribe that had been recognized in Berkley, California. We have been successful so far in stopping that one. Here is why I oppose these things:

- 1) Indian casino gambling was originally conceived in order to provide economic opportunity for big groups of largely full-blooded Indians who were poor and whose ancestral reservations were in remote areas with little economic opportunity. That has worked in many areas. Fine. But now you see a handful of professional people tracing small fractions of Indian ancestry, in urban areas where economic opportunity abounds wanting to become tribes so they can make tons of money on gambling. If they would agree to never have a casino, as a tribe in North Carolina recently agreed to do, then we would know that they were merely trying to preserve their cultural heritage. But the Juanenos are not doing that.
- 2) The federal tribal recognition process has existed for 30 years. Why has this tribal application only surfaced in the last 20 years or so? Perhaps because the availability of and profitability of casino gambling only came to California recently.
- 3) These are not tribes of thousands of people here. The people trying to establish these tribes usually number less than a dozen. I remember meeting once with a group of 6 trying to establish a tribe and a casino in downtown San Diego. So, we're supposed to grant gigantic casino rights so that 6 people can have economic opportunity?
- 4) Indian casinos are federally granted monopolies. You and I cannot open one to compete with the Juanenos if we wanted to. In an urban area, why not? They are also basically self-regulated in California so their profit margins are very high because of that lack of competition.
- 5) Casinos in urban areas are usually accompanied by increases in crime and spousal abuse

and gambling addiction.

6) These things are hard to stop because they are very profitable that there is plenty of money to go around for lobbyists and cities and consultants and the only losers are the public.

For all these reasons I have introduced a bill to place a 25 year moratorium on Indian casinos for newly recognized tribes. This will preserve the tribal recognition process for those who truly desire to preserve their heritage, but it will stop the practice of setting up these monopoly casinos in urban areas for at least a while.

If you agree with this bill or that we should not have casinos in urban areas like Orange County, please e-mail me back so that I can show the Bureau of Indian Affairs the breadth of the opposition to this tribe's plans.

**More TV Time:** Last Friday, I made an appearance on the CBS Evening News to talk about the "paint shield" earmark. [Here is the clip for those of you who didn't see it.](#)

Until next week, I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell